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Country: Czechoslovakia

Subject: Conditions in Tremesek: Establishment of Farm Cooperative/
Exploitation of Private Farmers/Local Officials/Reaction to
Deaths of Stalin and Gottwald/Nearby Plant Construction

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1. "Tremesek is a very small village -- about 300 inhabitants -- the Sumperk district of Czechoslovakia.

Establishment of Local Cooperative

2. "Preparations for setting up a farmers' cooperative in Tremesek did not start until November 1952. The chief founders of the local JZD were:

Jan Kudac - who was the greatest advocate of collective farming. He later became the first chairman of the Tremesek JZD. He owned 25 hectares of land but had to hire farm workers because all his children had jobs in towns. The elder daughter, aged 23, works as a clerk at the STB headquarters in Olomouc. The younger daughter, Margita, was planning to attend an STB course. His son, Frantisek, is a prison guard at Jachymov.

Eduard Rihacek He came to the village from a Brno district and knew virtually nothing about farming. His wife worked in a factory in Ostrava.

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- 2 -

Jan Kuchta, who owned no land. His job was to 'control' farms and forestry workers; he was known as a casomeric. He is about 30 and single. His brother-in-law, also one of the JZD founders, had one hectar of land.

Josef Tichy, who owned one hectar.

Josef Spychal, who owned five hectares.

3. "When the local farmers were summoned to a preparatory meeting on the establishment of the cooperative, they started to laugh openly when they saw who were the men in charge. But the main speaker, Eduard Rihacek, who later became deputy chairman of the JZD, warned them: 'Stop laughing. Such laughter is considered anti-State activity. I will have you arrested.' Farmers who opposed the cooperative simply stopped attending such meetings. However, at the beginning of January 1953, the agricultural referent of the District National Committee of Sumperk came to the village and declared categorically that all farmers who refused to join the cooperative would find themselves with jobs in labor camps.

Exploitation of Private Farmers

4. "Although the farmers who defied the threats and did not enter the cooperative were not arrested, they found it virtually impossible to carry on with private farming. They were allocated no fodder at all. The prices which they had to pay for fertilizers were 30% higher than those paid by the JZD members. The fines which they had to pay for unfulfilled delivery quotas were also exorbitant. I had to pay 73,000 cr. for unfulfilled deliveries of milk and eggs during 1952. I was accused of not having surrendered 1,500 liters of milk. The fine was calculated on the free market prices: 15 cr. per liter of milk and 10 cr. per egg. The exploitation of private farmers goes further. In autumn 1952 I received 90 cr. for the 100 kg of potatoes which I delivered to the State. But when I went to buy potatoes for my spring sowing I had to pay 750 cr. for the same quantity. Similarly, I received 170 cr. for 100 kg of oats and had to pay 1,500 cr for seeds. I received 300 cr per 100 kg of wheat and had to pay 1,800 cr for the seeds. Milk deliveries were increased for 1953. In 1952 I was supposed to deliver 5,000 liters. This quota was raised to 7,000 liters for 1953.

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- 3 -

5. "Other private farmers in Tremesek who suffered heavy fines for unfulfilled deliveries were Filip Seda, Frantisek Podesva, Adam Maruna, Michal Spacek, Ondrej and Jan Falat, Josef Petrzel and Ludvik and Jan Miho.
6. "One of the worst enemies of farmers in the Sumperk district is Alois Palka, who lives in Horni Libina. He was appointed by the Ministry of 'Purchases' ('Ministerstvo Vykupu') to visit the homes of farmers who failed to surrender their prescribed quotas. Accompanied by two members of the SNB, he confiscated any crops in sight. About 15 Sept 52 he visited the home of (fnu) Bufler in Vaclavov and confiscated potatoes and grain. The Bufler family had been repatriated from Volyn after World War II.

Local Officials

7. "The registered members of the Communist Party in Tremesek include:

Emil Dubrava
Augustin Cihlar
Michal Spacek
Jan Kulac and his daughter Margit
Frantiska Paprskarova and her father Frantisek Paprskar
Jan Folasta
Josef Spychal
Michal Kroka and his son Jan -- both gypsies
Alois Pindak
Jan Kuchta -- Chairman of the local CP organization
Jan Kovac
Alzbeta Kovacova
Liza Cesnekova
Alois Ospal
Josef Tichy
Jakub Pontok
Eduard Rihacek -- Deputy chairman of the local CP organization
Jan Dubrava -- In charge of political indoctrination

The District Party Secretary for the Sumperk district is Oldrich Zaoral.

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- 4 -

8. "The reorganization of the SNB in autumn 1952 left only one SNB official in Tremesek: praporcik Josef Bulicka.
9. "The commander of the fire brigade in Tremesek is Josef Bartosek, who is not a Communist.
10. "The chairman of the Youth League is Matej Repan, a Slovak. The acting secretary is Miss (fnu) Bartoskova. This unit of the League has only about 15 members.
11. "The director of the local school is Zdenek Steiger, a Catholic non-Communist who was formerly a theology student.
12. "The Chairman of the local National Committee is Alois Pindak. His deputy is Eduard Rihacek. The local secretary is Frantisek Tomecek. The security referent is Josef Spychal.
13. "Most of the young men of the village who have been called up for army service have been enrolled in PTP units as sons of 'kulaks'. One told me he was stationed with a unit working on the construction site of a military airfield near Line, which is near Plzen.

Reaction to Deaths of Stalin and Gottwald

14. "Certain restrictions were ordered in the village following Stalin's death. Sale of alcoholic beverages was prohibited and all dances and film shows were cancelled. The villagers, however, were in a good mood -- which improved after Gottwald's death. The non-Communists believed the time had come for the regime to collapse. The authorities instituted night patrols who spied to see if anyone was listening to foreign broadcasts. A memorial service for Gottwald was arranged in the local inn -- U Kaple. The prominent Party members formed a guard of honor. Prior to this official service it was announced over the local loudspeaker that the names of those citizens who did not attend would be posted as 'enemies of the Republic'. The chairmen of the local Party unit and of the local National Committee gave speeches, and Miss Helena Vitkova read a poem.

Nearby Plant Construction

15. "A large ammunition plant is under construction [late spring 1953] near Unicov in the Sumperk district. It is a branch of the Zbrojovka plant in Brno.

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- 5 -

16. "Another large plant is under construction on the Sumperk - Bludov road. One of the production halls was completed in January 1953.
17. "The glider training center built near Sumperk in 1950 is now being enlarged."

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